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-----084059 120928Z /20/10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 5 TEL AVIV 3076

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT PARA 3. CORRECTED)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IS
SUBJECT: DOMESTIC IMPACT IN ISRAEL SHOULD PEACE NEGOTIATIONS COLLAPSE

1. SUMMARY: SHOULD THE PEACE PROCESS FAIL, THE IMPACT ON THE
DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE WILL BE INTENSE, PERVASIVE
AND OF LASTING DURATION. THE SPECIFIC SHORT TERM POLITICAL
CONSEQUENCES WILL DEPEND IN LARGE PART ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES
OF FAILURE AND THE ISRAELI PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION
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OF THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES. IN THE CASE OF A SUDDEN AND
DRAMATIC COLLAPSE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, THE COUNTRY PROBABLY
WOULD RALLY BEHIND THE GOVERNMENT IN AN INSTINCTIVE ACT OF
DEFENSIVE NATIONAL SOLIDARITY. BEGIN WOULD SURELY
ATTEMPT TO BEING THIS ABOUT, AND A PUBLIC PERCEPTION
OF AN "UNFAIR" U.S. ADMINISTRATION WOULD AID HIM IN
THIS TASK. THE LABOR PARTY MIGHT FEEL COMPELLED, IN

SUCH A CRISIS ATMOSPHERE, TO JOIN A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY. WITH OUR WITHOUT LABOR, THE LIKUD GOVERNMENT'S POSITION PROBABLY WOULD NOT BE DRASTICALLY WEAKENED OVER THE SHORT RUN.

2. A SLOW PETERING OUT OF THE PEACE PROCESS WOULD LEAVE THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT FAR MORE VULNERABLE, PARTICULARLY IF THE NEGOTIATIONS WERE SEEN TO HAVE BROKEN UP OVER AN ISSUE--SUCH AS THE APPLICABILITY OF 242 TO THE WEST BANK OR RAFAH SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY--ON WHICH BEGIN DOES NOT HAVE THE SUPPORT OF A NATIONAL CONSENSUS. BEGIN WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO EXPLOIT A CRISIS ATMOSPHERE AND THE OPPOSIRITON WOULD NOT FEEL CONSTRAINED FROM ATTACKING HIM FOR BOTH HIS FOREIGN POLICY FAILURE AND HIS GOVERNMENT'S INEFFECTIVE HANDLING OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC QUESTIONS WHICH WOULD INCREASINGLY BE THE FOCUS OF PUBLIC ATTENTION. SUCH DOMESTIC PROBLEMS INCLUDE THE ECONOMY (GROWTH, INFLATION, AND LABOR RELATIONS), THE SOCIAL GAP, THE RELIGIOUS STATUS QUO, AND THE ISRAELI ARABS. WITH THE GRACE PERIOD GRANTED THE NEW GOVERNMENT (AND ARTIFICIALLY EXTENDED BY THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS) EXPIRED, ITS WEAKNESS ON DOMESTIC ISSUES WOULD BE EXPOSED BY A REVITALIZED LABOR OPPOSITION, AND STRAINS IN THE COALITION MIGHT REACH THE BREAKING POINT. THE DMC COULD LEAVE THE GOVERNMENT ON A RELIGIOUS ISSUE, AND THE HERUT-LIBERAL INTERNAL CONTRADICTION ON ECONOMIC POLICY MIGHT

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THREATEN THE UNITY OF THE LIKUD ITSELF.

3. BEGIN, FOLLOWING A FAILURE OF NEGOTIATIONS, WOULD HAVE THREE POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION. FIRST, HE COULD REMAIN ON AS PREMIER WITHOUT CALLING EARLY ELECTIONS. SECOND, HE MIGHT CHOOSE TO CALL ELECTIONS WHILE THE LIKUD IS STILL IN A RELATIVELY STRONG POSITION. FINALLY, HE COULD RESIGN. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT HE WOULD DO SO VOLUNTARILY. HOWEVER, PRESSURE COULD MOUNT FOR HIS OUSTER, AND HE MIGHT, IN A FIT OF DISGUST, DECIDE TO THROW IN THE TOWEL. WEIZMAN MIGHT BY THEN BE IN A POSITION TO SUCCEED BEGIN, BUT EHRlich'S AND DAYAN'S POSITIONS ARE LIKELY TO DETERIORATE. POSSIBLE POLICY INITIATIVES IN THE POST-NEGOTIATION PERIOD MIGHT INCLUDE OPENING THE WEST BANK FOR PRIVATE JEWISH LAND PURCHASE. SUPPORT MIGHT DEVELOP FOR A PREEMPTIVE WAR, AND EMIGRATION MIGHT RISE DRAMATICALLY. END SUMMARY.

4. IN THIS CABLE WE EXAMINE THE POSSIBLE DOMESTIC IMPLICATIONS OF A FAILURE IN THE PEACE PROCESS. (PLEASE BEAR IN MIND THAT WE ARE NOT PREDICTING A FAILURE, WE MERELY WISH TO EXAMINE THE POTENTIAL RAMIFICATIONS

OF SUCH AN EVENT.) UNDER THE RUBRIC OF FAILURE WE
INCLUDE THE WHOLE RANGE OF CESSATION OF TALKS BETWEEN
EGYPT AND ISRAEL, FROM A DRAMATIC AND SUDDEN BREAK TO
A SLOW AND GRADUAL WINDING DOWN OF CONTACTS.

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PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /100 W
-----084443 121124Z /13/53

P R 081101Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1717
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 5 TEL AVIV 3076

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 7. CORRECTED)

TM WHILE MUCH WILL DEPEND ON THE SPECIFIC CIR-
CUMSTANCES OF A NEGOTIATIONS FAILURE, ONE FACT IS
GLARINGLY OBVIOUS: THERE WILL BE NO RETURN TO THE
STATUS QUO ANTE. THE FIRST CONCRETE AND SUSTAINED
ENCOUNTER WITH THE PROSPECT (AND MEANING) OF PEACE
HAS LEFT A DEEP IMPRESSION ON THE NATIONAL PSYCHE.
ISRAELIS MAY PERSIST IN APPLYING THE "EARTHQUAKE"
METAPHOR WHEN ASSESSING THE PERIOD COMMENCING WITH
THE SADAT VISIT AND ENDING WITH THE NEGOTIATIONS BREAK-
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DOWN (DESPITE THE DOUBTFUL CONTRIBUTION OF THE METAPHOR TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF TWO PREVIOUS EVENTS--THE YOM KIPPUR WAR AND THE 1977 ELECTIONS). BUT THIS TIME THE LANGUAGE OF PSYCHOLOGY IS MORE APT THAN ANY GEOLOGICAL TERM: THIS PERIOD WILL BEAR THE DIMENSIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRAUMA OF NATIONAL PROPORTIONS. THE POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS OF A FAILURE IN THE PEACE PROCESS WILL BE INTENSE, PERVASIVE, AND OF LASTING DURATION, ALTHOUGH IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO PREDICT THEIR SPECIFIC FORM AND TIMING.

6. THERE IS A WIDE RANGE OF POSSIBLE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES WHICH WOULD FOLLOW A FAILURE OF THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. THE SHORT TERM POLITICAL FALLOUT WILL BE DETERMINED IN LARGE MEASURE BY THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF FAILURE, AND THE ISRAELI PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S SHARE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT. BEGIN WILL ATTEMPT TO CONVINCE THE PUBLIC THAT IT IS SADAT'S UNACCEPTABLE PRECONDITIONS ON TWO CORE ISSUES (COMPLETE TERRITORIAL WITHDRAWAL AND PALESTINAIN SELF-DETERMINATION) WHICH ELIMINATED ANY CHANCE OF ARRIVING AT A PEACE SETTLEMENT. THESE ARE ISSUES ON WHICH BEGIN ENJOYS THE SUPPORT OF A NATIONAL CONSENSUS. TO THE EXTENT THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE PERCEIVED TO HAVE BROKEN UP OVER ISSUES--SUCH AS THE APPLICABILITY OF 242 TO THE WEST BANK OR RAFAH SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY--ON WHICH THE LIKUD GOVERNMENT IS VULNERABLE AND/OR DOES NOT REPRESENT A NATIONAL CONSENSUS, BEGIN'S POSITION WILL BE WEAKENED.

7. A SUDDEN AND DRAMATIC BREAK. IF THERE IS A DRAMATIC COLLAPSE OF THE PEACE TALKS OVER A QUESTION ON WHICH THE GOVERNMENT ENJOYS A NATIONAL CONSENSUS--OR IF THE PUBLIC CAN BE CONVINCED THAT THIS IS THE CASE--
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THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT WILL NOT LOSE SUPPORT, AT LEAST IN THE SHORT RUN. BEGIN COULD BE EXPECTED TO LAUNCH A CAMPAIGN TO PERSUADE THE PUBLIC THAT THE PRICE DEMANDED BY THE OTHER SIDE FOR PEACE WAS TOO HIGH, ONE WHICH PUT IN JEOPARDY ISRAEL'S VITAL SECURITY INTERESTS AND ULTIMATELY ITS SURVIVAL. SUCH A TASK IS MADE TO ORDER FOR BEGIN'S RHETORICAL SKILLS, SENSE OF MISSION, AND EXPERIENCE AND UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES HE WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL.

8. THE AMERICAN ROLE WOULD BE IMPORTANT IN THIS CONNECTION.
IF THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION IS PERCEIVED TO HAVE BEEN
"UNFAIR," OR TO HAVE "ABANDONED" ISRAEL, BEGIN WILL
MORE EASILY BE ABLE TO RALLY THE COUNTRY BEHIND HIM IN
A REACTION OF DEFENSIVE NATIONAL SOLIDARITY. (THE "SEIGE
MENTALITY" LIES NOT FAR BELOW THE SURFACE.)

9. IT IS POSSIBLE IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT THE LABOR
OPPOSITION, REALIZING THE FUTILITY OF AN ATTEMPT IN
SUCH AN ATMOSPHERE TO BLAME THE PEACE FAILURE ON BEGIN,
WOULD WITH GREAT FANFARE FOREGO PARTISAN INTERESTS AND
AGREE TO JOIN A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY. BEGIN
MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO EXERT HEAVY PRESSURE IN THIS
DIRECTION, AS A CO-OPTION OF LABOR WOULD SPREAD RE-
SPONSIBILITY FOR THE HANDLING OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES,
ALREADY TERMED THE ACHILLE'S HEEL OF THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT
(ALTHOUGH INITIALLY LITTLE ATTENTION MIGHT BE PAID TO
THOSE ISSUES IN SUCH A CRISIS ATMOSPHERE). TI WOULD
ALSO PROTECT THE LIKUD AGAINST LATER ATTEMPTS BY LABOR
TO CASH IN ON ANY FUTURE REAPPORTIONMENT IN THE PUBLIC
MIND OF BLAME FOR THE FAILURE OF THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.
WHETHER OR NOT LABOR JOINED A NATIONAL COALITION,
BEGIN WOULD BE EXPECTED TO RETAIN HIS BROAD BASE OF
SUPPORT FOR THE SHORT RUN (3-4 MONTHS).

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PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /100 W
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P R 081101Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1718
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AMEMBASSY BONN
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 5 TEL AVIV 3076

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

10. A SLOW AND GRADUAL HALT. MORE LIKELY, HOWEVER, IS A SLOW PETERING OUT OF THE PEACE PROCESS, ACCOMPANIED BY CONTINUING CHARGES OF PREVARICATIONS AND INCONSISTENCIES BY EACH GOVERNMENT. IN SUCH A CASE, THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT'S POSITION WILL BE CONSIDERABLY WEAKENED, FOR THREE MAIN REASONS. FIRST, BEGIN WILL NOT BE ABLE TO EXPLOIT A CRISIS ATMOSPHERE TO INVOKE NATIONAL SOLIDARITY BEHIND A GOVERNMENT WHOSE INTELLIGENT, DARING, AND RESORCEFUL COMMITMENT TO PEACE HAD BEEN FOILED BY THE BELLIGERENT
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INSINCERITY OF THE OPPOSING PARTY.

11. SECOND, A PROTRACTED DEATH OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WILL PROVIDE THE LABOR PARTY WITH BOTH THE TIME IT NEEDS TO REBUILD AND TO DEVELOP A POWERFUL CRITIQUE OF THE LIKUD'S PEACE STRATEGY, AND ALSO THE ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH IT CAN BEGIN TO MOBILIZE PUBLIC DISSATISFACTION WITH BEGIN'S FOREIGN POLICY FAILURE. THIRD AND MOST IMPORTANT, A GRADUAL DISSOLUTION OF THE PEACE PROCESS WOULD BE--AND IS ALREADY--ACCOMPANIED BY SHARPENED PUBLIC FOCUS ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES AND ON THE GOVERNMENT'S INEFFECTIVE PERFORMATNCE IN THESE AREAS. LOSS OF CREDIBILITY IN TTU DOMESTIC AREA WILL MAKE IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO MOBILIZE SUPPORT ON A FOREIGN POLICY ISSUE IF THE NEGOTIATIONS WERE TO FIZZLE RATHER THAN EXPLODE. ON THE CONTRARY, THE PUBLIC WOULD BE MORE INCLINED TO EXTEND DOUBTS FROM THE DOMESTIC TO THE FOREIGN POLICY AREA.

12. IN THIS SECOND SCENARIO THEN, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO DRAW ON THE UNIFYING EFFECT OF AN EXTERNAL CRISIS. THERE WOULD BE NO EXTENSION OF THE GRACE PERIOD WHICH THE LIKUD GOVERNMENT HAS TO A LARGE EXTENT ENJOYED SINCE ITS FOMATION. WHILE THE PUBLIC WAS WILLING TO GRANT ONE FOR ITS FIRST SEVERAL MONTHS OF LIFE, PATIENCE WAS WEARING THIN BY THE TIME SADAT'S APPEARANCE IN JERUSALEM PROVIDED THE GOVERNMENT WITH THE OPPORTUNITY FURTHER TO POSTPONE TOUGH DECISIONS ON DOMESTIC MATTERS. AS WE HAVE REPORTED, THIS PERIOD IS APPROACHING ITS END--THE GOVERNMENT IS COMING UNDER INCRASING FIRE

FOR ITS HANDLING OF THE ECONOMY AND FOR ITS INACTION
ON VARIOUS SOCIAL QUESTIONS.

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13. THIS LIST OF THESE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS IS LONG, AND ONFLICT IN ONE AREA IS BOUND TO COMPLICATE HANDLING OF RELATED ISSUES. GOVERNMENT HANDLING OF ECONOMY WILL COME UNDER SHARPER ATTACK, AND CRITICS WILL FOCUS ON THE "SOCIAL GAP" AND AN ECONOMIC POLICY WHICH PRUPORTEDLY SUCCEEDS AT THE EXPENSE OF "THE SECOND ISRAEL," THE URBAN AND DEVELOPMENT TOWN POOR.

14. THE AGUDA AND THE NRP CAN BE EXPECTED TO PUSH MORE FORCEFULLY ON RELIGIOUS MATTERS (ON THE "WHO IS A JEW" QUESTION, AS A STARTER), USING THEIR POSITION OF STRENGTH IN THE COALITION TO UPSET THE FRAGILE STATUS QUO AND BRING ABOUT A POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AND SECULARIST ISRAELIS. THE DISRUPTIVE EFFECT OF THE PLURALISM IN EDUCATION RESOLUTIONS AT THE WORLD ZIONIST CONGRESS LAST WEEK ILLUSTRATES THE POTENTIAL DIVISIVENESS OF THIS QUESTION. THE ISRAELI ARAB COMMUNITY CONTINUES TO NURSE GRIEVANCES, AND ITS YOUTH IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY RADICALIZED. UTTER DISCOURAGEMENT OVER THE DASHING OF ITS PEACE HOPES COULD TRIGGER REPETITIONS OF "LAND DAY"-TYPE EXPLOSIONS LEADING TO THE EVOLUTION OF AN ACTIVELY HOSTILE MINORITY POPULATION.

15. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COALITION'S VIABILITY. A SLOW DEATH OF THE PEACE TALKS WOULD NOT PROVIDE THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT MUCH OF A CUSHION AGAINST OPPOSITION CRITICISMS ON DOMESTIC ISSUES. REALIZING THIS, BEGIN MIGHT CALL FOR A NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT. DESPITE PERES' LONGSTANDING INTEREST IN LEADING LABOR INTO A BROAD COALITION, IT SEEMS DOUBTFUL THAT THE LABOR PARTY WOULD AGREE TO DO SO JUST AS THE LIKUD GOVERNMENT BECOMES MOST VULNERABLE. IT IS MORE LIKELY THAT LABOR WOULD INSTEAD FINALLY BEGIN TO FORGE ITSELF INTO AN EFFECTIVE OPPOSITION EXPLOITING LIKUD WEAKNESS ON DOMESTIC ISSUES AD TEMPTING DISSATISFIED COALITION

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PARTNERS (I.E., THE DMC AND PERHAPS LIBERALS) TO BOLT
THE GOVERNMENT.

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P R 081101Z MAR 76
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1719
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 4 OF 5 TEL AVIV 3076

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT PARAS 18 AND 19)

16. DEFECTION BY THE DMC, UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IS
A REALISTIC POSSIBILITY. AS THE FOCUS WOULD BE SHIFTED
TO THE KIND OF DOMESTIC CONCERNS WHICH WERE THE ORIGINAL
RAISON D'ETRE FOR THE NEW PARTY AND TO THE GOVERNMENT'S
POOR PERFORMANCE IN MEETING THOSE CONCERNS, IT WOULD BE
INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT FOR THE DMC TO MAKE THE KIND OF
COMPROMISES WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN ACCEPTABLE WHEN FOREIGN
POLICY CONSIDERATIONS TOOK PRECEDENCE OVER RIGID ADHERENCE
TO PRINCIPLE ON DOMESTIC POLICY. ON ECONOMIC ISSUES,
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THE DMC MAY AT SOME POINT REFUSE TO CONTINUE TO BE IDENTIFIED WITH A GOVERNMENT WHICH APPEARS TO NEGLECT THE PROBLEMS OF THE POORER SOCIAL STRATA. MORE LIKELY HOWEVER IS A CONFRONTATION OVER A RELIGIOUS ISSUE, WITH THE AGUDA AND THE NRP BEING ABLE TO CALL ON THE SUPPORT OF THE LIKUD. WHATEVER THE ISSUE, LOSS OF THE DMC WOULD LEAVE THE COALITION STILL WITH MAJORITY SUPPORT, BUT IN AN EVEN WEAKER POSITION TO GOVERN EFFECTIVELY IN THE FACE OF A REVITALIZED AND NUMERICALLY AUGMENTED OPPOSITION.

17. ANOTHER POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS FAULTLINE IN THE COALITION IS THE DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT CONSTITUENCIES OF HERUT AND THE LIBERALS. HERUT HAS TRADITIONALLY APPEALED TO THE POORER SEGMENTS OF THE POPULATION AND THE ORIENTAL COMMUNITY, WHILE THE LIBERAL BASE IS AMONG THE URBAN AND SUBURBAN MIDDLE CLASS OF WESTERN EXTRACTION. IN THE GENERAL POLITICAL MALAISE ACCOMPANYING A NEGOTIATIONS FAILURE, GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC POLICY MIGHT COME TO BE IDENTIFIED WITH THE INTERESTS OF THE LIBERAL'S BUSINESS CONSTITUENCY AND VIEWED AS DETRIMENTAL TO THE INTERESTS OF THE POOR (AS WE ARE BEGINNING TO HEAR). HERUT WOULD FEEL CALLED UPON TO CONFRONT THE LIBERALS AND THE COALITION WOULD BEGIN TO UNRAVEL.

18. THE PRIME MINISTER'S CHOICES. BEGIN'S COURSE OF ACTION FOLLOWING A FAILURE OF NEGOTIATIONS, WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE CRITICAL. THREE CHOICES WOULD APPEAR TO BE OPEN TO HIM. FIRST, AND THE LATTER SCENARIO DESCRIBED ASSUMES THIS CHOICE, HE COULD CHOOSE TO REMAIN AS PRIME MINISTER AND NOT CALL FOR NEW ELECTIONS. SECOND, HE MAY DECIDE TO SEEK THE APPROVAL OF THE KNESSET TO CALL EARLY ELECTIONS WHILE THE LIKUD STILL RETAINS A HEALTHY POSITION IN

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THE POLLS, IN ORDER TO GAIN A BROADER NUMERICAL BASE IN THE KNESSET WITH WHICH TO COPE EFFECTIVELY WITH DOMESTIC ISSUES. HE ALSO MIGHT HOPE THAT A SOLID LIKUD VICTORY WOULD FORTIFY HIS LEADERSHIP POSITION WITHIN THE LIKUD AGAINST WEIZMAN OR ANY OTHER CONTENDERS. (A LIKUD VICTORY CANNOT OF COURSE BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED. DURING THE THREE TO SIX MONTHS WHICH WOULD NECESSARILY ELAPSE BEFORE AN ELECTION, PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE LIKUD COULD ERODE DRAMATICALLY.)

19. A THIRD CHOICE FOR BEGIN WOULD BE RESIGNATION. IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT BEGIN, AFTER A THIRTY YEAR WAIT, WOULD VOLUNTARILY RELINQUISH THE PREMIERSHIP AFTER SUCH A SHORT TERM OF OFFICE. NOR WOULD HE HIMSELF LIKELY FEEL COMPELLED BY CONSCIENCE TO LEAVE HIS POST DUE TO OTHERS'

PERCEPTIONS OF HIS RESPONSIBILITY FOR A MAJOR FOREIGN
POLICY FAILURE. (IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT BEGIN HIMSELF
WOULD FEEL THAT HE HAD IN ANY WAY LET HIS NATION DOWN.)
HOWEVER, PRESSURE MIGHT DEVELOP FOR BEGIN'S RESIGNATION--
EITHER PUBLIC PRESSURE OF THE KIND THAT WAS DIRECTED
AGAINST DAYAN AFTER THE YOM KIPPUR WAR, OR PRESSURE
FROM WITHIN THE LIKUD. WHILE IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT
SUFFICIENT PRESSURE COULD OR WOULD BE EXERTED FROM EITHER
SOURCE TO FORCE BEGIN TO RESIGN AGAINST HIS WILL, IT IS
CONCEIVABLE THAT A DEEPLY OFFENDED BEGIN, WHO FELT HE
WAS UNDER ATTACK FROM AN UNGRATEFUL PEOPLE AND/OR BE-
TRAYED BY HIS SUPPORTERS, MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO RESIGN IN
DISGUST.

20. THE ONLY CREDIBLE LEADER OF AN INTERNAL REVOLT
AGAINST BEGIN, AND ALSO THE ONLY CREDIBLE SUCCESSOR IN
CASE OF BEGIN'S DEATH OR RESIGNATION UNDER PRESSURE IS, AT
THIS MOMENT, EZER WEIZMAN. IT CANNOT BE RULED OUT, THAT HE MIGHT
EMERGE IN THE POST-NEGOTIATIONS PERIOD AS THE ONLY
(RELATIVELY) UNSCATHED LIKUD LEADER STRONG ENOUGH
EITHER TO UNSEAT BEGIN OR SUCCEED HIM.

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PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /100 W

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P R 081259Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1720

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 5 OF 5 TEL AVIV 3076

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 21. CORRECTED)

21. THE POSITION OF TWO OTHER MINISTERS IS LIKELY TO
DETERIORATE DURING THE IMMEDIATE POST-NEGOTIATIONS
PERIOD. EHRLICH WOULD BECOME THE LIGHTNING ROD FOR
CRITICISM OF ECONOMIC POLICY AND HAS FEW PERSONAL ATTRI-
BUTES WHICH MIGHT AID HIM IN DEFLECTING AN OPPOSITION
ASSAULT. HIS FATE AS THE LIKUD'S RABINOWITZ SEEMS
ASSURED. DAYAN, THE FOREIGN POLICY WIZARD WHO DID NOT
BRING PEACE WOULD FIND HIS CREDIT WITH THE PUBLIC EXHAUSTED AND
HIS USE TO BEGIN CONSIDERABLY DIMINISHED.
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22. IT IS DIFFICULT TO FORESEE ANY BOLD POLICY
INITIATIVES BY AN INCREASINGLY WEAK POST NEGOTIATIONS
GOVERNMENT. SPECULATION AT THIS TIME FOCUSES ON TWO
AREAS. FIRST, THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO
MOVE FORWARD TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION OF STANDING PLANS
TO OPEN UP THE WEST BANK FOR PRIVATE JEWISH LAND PURCHASE
OR OTHER EXTENSIONS OF ISRAELI LAW TO THE TERRITORIES
("CREEPING ANNEXATION"). SECOND, PRESSURE MIGHT MOUNT
WITHIN THE MILITARY AND AMONG RIGHT WING POLITICAL
FORCES FOR A PRE-EMPTIVE WAR AGAINST THE ARAB STATES
WHILE ISRAEL'S MILITARY SUPERIORITY IS STILL INTACT.
HERE AGAIN, THE CIRCUMSTANCES, ATMOSPHERE AND ISRAELI
PERCEPTIONS OF THE PEACE FAILURE WOULD HAVE A DETERMINING
EFFECT ON THE DIRECTION OF POLICY IN THESE AND OTHER
AREAS. FINALLY, A RESULTANT SOCIAL PHENOMENON--AN
UPSURGE OF EMIGRATION, ESPECIALLY OF DISSILLUSIONED YOUTH--
MIGHT HAVE SERIOUS POLITICAL RAMIFICATION.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION, POLITICAL SITUATION, PEACE TALKS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TELAV03076
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780145-0735, D780104-0432
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780390/aaaacyrl.tel
Line Count: 595
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 11
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3397998
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DOMESTIC IMPACT IN ISRAEL SHOULD PEACE NEGOTIATIONS COLLAPSE
TAGS: PINT, PINR, IS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fde70fcb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014